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U.S. EPA announces \$8.6 million to reduce water pollution, recycle e-waste and improve environmental health along U.S.–Mexico border

San Diego— The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is awarding over \$8.6 million in grants to fund environmental improvement projects along the U.S.–Mexico border. The funds were announced today during a border tour led by EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy in San Diego.

“Water, waste and environmental health concerns cross national boundaries, and environmental solutions benefit communities on both sides of our shared border,” said EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy. “Border projects have benefitted 8 million border residents, providing 63,000 homes with first-time drinking water service and 569,000 homes with first-time wastewater services.”

The EPA funds were awarded in partnership with the North American Development Bank and the Border Environment Cooperation Commission to advance commitments in the U.S.–Mexico environmental collaboration known as the Border 2020 Program.

These project awards are in addition to seven environmental improvement projects announced earlier this year along the California and Arizona U.S-Mexico border, which leveraged an additional \$425,500 from the recipient organizations.

Border 2020 is a bi-national collaborative effort with a mission to protect human health and the environment along the U.S.–Mexico border. The North American Development Bank and the Border Environment Cooperation Commission are international organizations established to preserve, protect, and finance environmental infrastructure projects in the U.S.–Mexico border region. To date, EPA has invested awarded \$597 million in border environmental programs.

Today’s announcement includes:

- **Border Environment Infrastructure Fund**

EPA is providing \$5 million to the North American Development Bank for the Border Environment Infrastructure Fund, which funds the construction of drinking water and wastewater infrastructure along the U.S.–Mexico border. Projects along the California, Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas border regions will receive funding based on a selection process conducted by EPA with assistance from the Border Environment Cooperation Commission.

- **Border Wastewater Treatment Plant Upgrade**

The City of Holtville, Calif. will receive \$3.5 million from the Border Environment Infrastructure Fund to upgrade its wastewater treatment plant. The \$11 million project is jointly funded with a \$4 million California Clean Water State Revolving Fund grant and a \$3.5 million loan. The project will reduce ammonia pollution discharges to the Salton Sea.

- **New River Cleanup and Education Campaign**

In partnership with Mexican federal, state, and local agencies, the Sonoran Institute, headquartered in Tucson, Ariz., will use \$65,000 in EPA Border 2020 funds to clean and restore a segment of the New River in Mexicali, Baja Calif. and launch community environmental education and capacity building efforts to prevent future illegal dumping and degradation in the river that flows north into California.

- **Electronic Waste Management**

Fundación Hélice, a non-profit environmental organization, will use \$52,500 in EPA Border 2020 funds to address the growing need to manage discarded electronics (e-waste) in an environmentally protective manner. The project will build capacity to collect and recycle e-waste, using internationally recognized best management practices, and divert these materials from landfills and dumps in Mexicali, Baja Calif., potentially affecting the New River watershed. Similar projects are being implemented in the Arizona-Sonora border region.

- **Border Environmental Health Assessment**

The California Department of Public Health will use \$49,180 in EPA Border 2020 funds to collect and analyze important health data to determine environmental health disparities and priority needs along the U.S.–Mexico border. The project will include a plan of action to replicate this effort in other parts of the border area and help target future environmental health efforts.

During her visit to San Diego today, Administrator McCarthy presented EPA SmartWay Excellence Awards to freight carriers in California and Arizona at the American Trucking Association's Annual Management Conference. *[will add link to HQ SmartWay PR]* Administrator McCarthy also met with San Diego State University Sage Project students and National City officials working on sustainability issues in their community.

For more information on Border 2020, visit: www.epa.gov/border2020

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